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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/608,088	06/30/2003	Felix Buechi	2003P09049US	8074
28204	7590	02/02/2006	EXAMINER	
SIEMENS SCHWEIZ I-44, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ALBISRIEDERSTRASSE 245 ZURICH, CH-8047 SWITZERLAND			CANTELMO, GREGG	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1745	
DATE MAILED: 02/02/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/608,088	Applicant(s) BUECHI ET AL.	
	Examiner Gregg Cantelmo	Art Unit 1745	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 June 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. No IDS appears to have been filed with the application prior to this office action.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to because the drawings are replete with errors.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

For example:

- a. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the

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description: characters 11, 20 and 21 of Figs. 1 and 2 do not appear to be in the written description as they would relate to these figures. They do not appear to correspond to the disclosed webs 20 and 21 in the remaining figures. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance;

b. Figures 1 and 2 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any

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required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance;

c. The apparently hand-drawn lead lines and reference numbers are not clear and should be replaced with clearer lead lines and reference numbers;

d. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "33" has been used to designate both the hydrogen outlet for the anode and inner uptakes (Fig. 3). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance;

e. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "32" has been used to designate both hydrogen inlet in the anode and channel section in the cathode (Fig. 3). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior

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version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance;

f. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "33a" has been used to designate both the web 21 sidewall and end portion of the end plate (Fig. 4). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

f. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "33b" has been used to designate both the web 21 sidewall and end portion of the web plate (Fig. 4). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to

avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

g. Due to the significant number of objections to the drawings, Applicant is advised to carefully review the specification and drawings for any additional inconsistencies or errors.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term "substantially similar materials" in claim 12 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "substantially similar materials" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Neither the claim nor the specification provides reasonable

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disclosure as to what materials and what characteristics of the materials are such which were considered by the instant invention as being "substantially similar" as claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S.

Patent No. 4,973,530 (Vanderborgh).

Vanderborgh discloses a method of providing humidity to an electrolyte membrane 102 of a fuel cell 80 the membrane running between a cell anode area and cell cathode area, comprising the step of exchanging humidity from humidified oxidant and humidified cooling flown on the cathode side through regions 97 and 95 through membranes 109, 102 and 108 into the fluids flowing in regions 117 and 110 of the anode side (Fig. 5 and col. 8, line 34 through col. 9, line 47 as applied to claim 1).

The humidified fluids are routed on opposite sides of the membrane via humidity-permeable membranes 109, 102 and 108 and are discharged from the fuel cell after passing through the membranes via outlets 88 and 104 (Fig. 5 as applied to claim 2).

The fluid flow is at least one of the same, opposite or cross-current-routed direction flow (Figs. 5 and 6A-6C as applied to claim 3).

The fuel cell depicted in Figs. 5 and 6A-6C is disclosed as being configured in a stack and thus each cell in the stack would have the same separate flow channels and

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pervious membranes as shown in Figs. 5 and 6A-6C (col. 4, ll. 36-60; col. 9, ll. 48-57 as applied to claims 4-9).

The apparatus shown in Figs. 5 and 6A-6C include a cathode area, anode area, electrolyte membrane 102, inflow lines 86, 116, 105 and 94 for accommodating fluid to the cathode and anode areas, outflow lines 88, 114, 107 and 92 for accommodating fluid from the cathode and anode areas, and humidity exchangers 109, 102 and 108 associated with the cathode and anode areas and positioned along one of the inflow and outflow lines with the exchanger providing humidification between the cathode and anode areas (Fig. 5 as applied to claim 10).

The humidity exchanger comprises a humidifying and dehumidifying zone separated by pervious membranes 109, 102 and 108 wherein inflow lines are positioned in the humidifying zone and outflow lines are positioned in the dehumidifying zone (Fig. 5 as applied to claim 11).

The fuel cell includes an electrolyte membrane 102 and membranes 108 and 109 which are "substantially similar" materials with respect to being pervious to humidity (as applied to claim 12).

The electrolyte membrane 102 and humidity pervious membranes 108 and 109 combine in the same plane to form different portions of a continuous membrane (Fig. 5 as applied to claim 13).

The fuel cell depicted in Figs. 5 and 6A-6C is disclosed as being configured in a stack and thus each cell in the stack would have the same separate flow channels and

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pervious membranes as shown in Figs. 5 and 6A-6C (col. 4, ll. 36-60; col. 9, ll. 48-57 as applied to claims 14-23).

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gregg Cantelmo whose telephone number is (571) 272-1283. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan, can be reached on (571) 272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306. FAXES received after 4 p.m. will not be processed until the following business day. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Gregg Cantelmo
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1745

gc 

January 27, 2006